GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by
THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.
for
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Education

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AN EXPLANATION

The Geographic News Bulletins may be used as collateral reading in History, Geography, and Current Events classes. Some of them will be of use in Literature and Science courses.

They are intended to aid the teacher in introducing the pupil to the Geography and History of places at that crucial moment when the pupil's interest in those places has been aroused.

They are designed to meet the urgent demand for complete accounts of peoples and places which no text-book possibly can give.

They seek to be, first of all, accurate, and, after that, readable, that they may stimulate interest in the subjects treated.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

The Bulletins are furnished by The National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.

Teachers may apply individually for them; principals may apply for copies for teachers (not for individual pupils at present) and for their school libraries. Superintendents desiring copies for their entire teaching staff should correspond with the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., as to methods of sending in quantities.

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Barcelona: Chameleon City of Spain

WHILE the United States was coping with the coal miners' strike Spain had industrial troubles of an opposite sort—a national lockout of workers. Barcelona, meeting place of the employers' congress which ordered this drastic action, is the chameleon city of Spain. In some quarters streets are narrower and more crooked than those of old London; in others are avenues, boulevards, shops and cafes, which vie with those of Paris. The city has an aristocracy which lives so far in the past that its scions still deplore the discovery of America. These gentle patricians are undisturbed by the agitators for all sorts of political and economic novelties.

Until 1492 Barcelona was the New York of the Mediterranean. Its position in the northeastern coast of Spain, actually at about the same latitude as New York City, relatively is to the Mediterranean world what that western city is to Atlantic trade routes. Columbus' voyage was considered a bit of impertinence on the part of the Castilian government to upset the balance of trade in favor of cities in western and southern Spain.

Soon a movement swept the Catalan provinces, of which Barcelona is the center, for annexation to France. In 1640 Catalonia did rebel against Philip IV, gave itself over to French protection, but its old allegiance was renewed in 1652, and cemented by the peace of Ryswick before the close of the seventeenth century.

In four centuries this resentment had ameliorated enough to permit the placing of a statue of Christopher Columbus in the Rambla, Fifth Avenue of Barcelona. After the Spanish-American war mobs of Barcelona citizens stoned and egged the explorer's statue "as punishment for the having ventured to find so troublesome a new world for Spain."

And Still Barcelona Flourished

Despite its commercial subsidence when the Atlantic replaced the Mediterranean as the major water route of civilization, Barcelona flourished. A year after the late war between George Dewey and Spain, as O. Henry put it, Barcelona paid more than a tenth of the kingdom's entire revenue from industrial taxation. Before the World War some two score important shipping companies had made it a port of regular call, and today the city has a population exceeding half a million.

In respect to publicity Barcelona has hardly put its best foot forward, since it is heard of most often as a center of riots, strikes, and rebellions. Though one traveler found the citizens pleasantly surprised that King Alfonso, who had just visited there, had escaped with his life, he concluded after staying a time that, "with all her reputation for turbulence Barcelona seemed an enlightened and thoroughly progressive city." Havelock Ellis paid a more glowing tribute, after admitting the city's faults, by saying, "Barcelona is a revelation of what a great commercial city may be when humanely and

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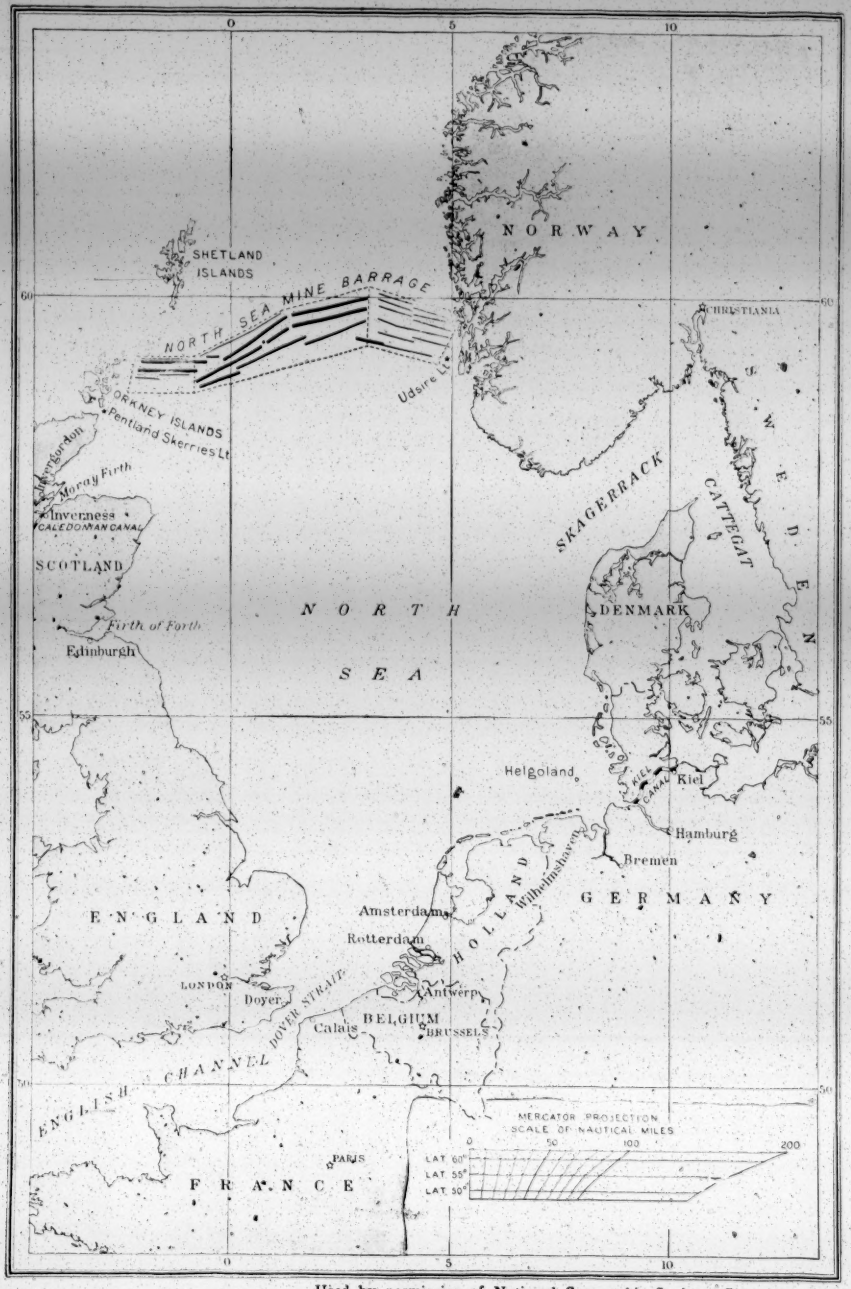

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CHART OF THE NORTH SEA, SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE MINE BARRAGE LAID BY THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH MINING SQUADRONS

When this mine barrage was found to be effective, Germany realized that her submarine warfare had failed and that the ultimate defeat of her land forces was inevitable. (See Bulletin No. 2.)

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How the "Suicide Squadron" Worked

AMERICA'S associates in the war, and now the Germans also, admit that the surrender of the German fleet and the armistice were brought about largely by the failure of the submarine warfare, and this failure was admitted as soon as the North Sea Mine barrage was found to be effective.

A previous bulletin contained the hitherto untold story of the remarkable work done in getting the mines ready for hurried shipment. A careful study of the geography of the North Sea, a study made by Rear Admiral Joseph Strauss, U. S. N., was a needful preliminary to the operation. For that service Admiral Strauss recently has been honored by the award of a life membership in The National Geographic Society. In a communication to The National Geographic Society, Capt. Reginald R. Belknap, U. S. N., who was in charge of the actual laying of the mines, gives the following description of the exciting episodes and top speed with which the planting was done:

"On one of the joint excursions of British and American ships, ten American ships planted 5,520 mines, the four British ships planting 1,300, making a total of 6,820 planted in four hours. That was the record for number. The American squadron alone, a few weeks later, planted a field 73 miles long, making a record for distance.

Preparations for Mining "Excursion"

"By June 3, 191', preparations were going full blast for the first mining excursion. This term, excursion, was adopted as a cheerful offset to the sense of danger. One cargo of TNT had been enough to devastate Halifax, and our squadron had ten cargoes. Our course would lie through areas where it was necessary to search for mines constantly, and we would come frequently in the regular thoroughfare for enemy submarines.

"By June 6 all was ready for the first excursion. The eve of departure brings drizzling, misty weather. Midnight comes, and without signals or lights or any noise but the clanking chain, the flagship gets under way and heads out.

"Straight over to Norway we go; making Udsire Light; then off to the northwestward. It is a busy night and early morning, keeping the ships in station, going over the mines for final touches, watching on every hand for submarines, and getting all clear for our first large operation.

"At 4:27 a. m. the signal is made that mining will begin one hour later. The crews go to mining stations, and in the flagship we look for signals reporting whether the other ships are ready. They ARE ready. It is like a horse race when the starter's flag is up.

"The squadron stretches a mile and a half in a beautifully straight line abreast.

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harmoniously organized. In a beautiful and exquisitely tempered climate, a robustly independent and clear eyed population has here freely expanded itself, loving work and loving play, and combining these two fundamental human impulses more completely and more admirably than in any other equally great city."

Was Setting of Don Quixote's Adventures

Despite its disorders and its modernism, Barcelona retains many relics of those mellow times when Cervantes made it the setting for Don Quixote's later adventures. There still are church processions, lottery ticket sellers, policemen with red coats and helmets, flower stalls and caged bird vendors. Folk lore embellishes the story of the girlish martyr, Saint Eulalia, whose ashes lie in the Barcelona cathedral, perhaps the darkest of all churches, and among the most beautiful in Spain. Cool fountains play in the cloister garden, among oleanders, and orange and lemon trees, and pools disclose geese, not violaters of the mediaeval sanctity, but contributory to it, when one learns they are descended from the birds formerly used for augury.

Many of Barcelona's political disturbances may be attributed to a difference of temperament between the Catalan and the southern Spaniard; a difference akin to that between the Yankee and the Dixie plantation owner before the Civil War welded our common interests so indissolubly. The Catalan more nearly resembles his thrifty, enterprising, practical French neighbor than the courtly, dreamy Castilian. Moreover, the Catalan emphasizes this difference by speaking and writing in his own dialect, called the harshest of Romance tongues.

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Around the World in Forty Vehicles

NOW that the Atlantic has been crossed and there are plans afoot to fly over the Pacific, the day may not be far distant when some aerial Magellan will make an aeroplane trip around the world.

There are still many corners of the world where aeroplane, automobile and even the horse would be curiosities. And if a man set out to tour the globe and "do as the Romans do" in respect to adopting native conveyances he would have to:

Resort to a donkey in Spanish America and in the Holy Land,

Climb aboard a camel to traverse African deserts,

Cross some rivers of India on the inflated skins of bullocks, and others by a bridge of one rawhide rope,

Submit to the sea-going motion of an Indian elephant when he continued his journey on land.

Get into a man-borne palanquin at Calcutta,

Jolt over far eastern roads in a non-shock absorbing cart drawn by oxen.

And in China be prepared to climb into a jinrikisha, a sedan chair or a wheelbarrow.

Some Curious Conveyances

A few of these curious means of travel are described in a communication to The Society by O. P. Austin, as follows:

"In all parts of that great line of deserts, stretching from North Africa across Central Asia to Northwest China, the camel is everywhere in evidence; the total number in the world being estimated at about three millions.

"Not only is the camel a valuable freight carrier, but he serves as the travelling car of the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, the Morgans, and the Harrimans of the desert. When he is chosen for this more pretentious service, a light framework is placed upon his back and covered with cloths to screen the occupants from the sun and the observation of the passers, and decorated with pompons of varied colors. In this gorgeous compartment, which may be not inaptly termed the 'Palace Car of the Desert,' the master of the camel train places his wife and children, his choicest merchandise, his cooking utensils and daily requirements, and travels in state, the observed of all observers, the envy of the wandering native of the desert.

Rafts of Skins and Circular Boats

"On the Euphrates and the Tigris are still retained the curious water transports of centuries ago—the raft of skins and the circular boats. These rafts are sustained by inflated skins, prepared for this especial purpose, and after the raft floats down the river to its destination the inflated skins are removed, the air permitted to escape, and the skins carefully folded and carried back to the upper waters, where they are again inflated and used as the support of another, and still another raft.

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"Five Seconds—Haul Down!"

"Now the mine-planting signal is flying; they will begin when it starts down. The Commander stands, watch in hand—'two minutes, one minute, thirty seconds more, fifteen'—he looks up inquiringly. All right, 'Five seconds—haul down!'

"And in answer red flags break out on the other ships, showing that they have begun to plant. On the flagship's bridge the call-bell rings, and from the launching station at the stern the report comes, 'First mine over.'

"Hour after hour the mining goes on. The staff officers watch the scheduled events and compare the times with what they should be. A few seconds out here and there; otherwise all goes without a hitch—just as planned before leaving the United States.

"Now we watch the Housatonic, a new ship, with a new, untried installation, doing a string of 675 mines, one every 11½ seconds throughout two hours and ten minutes. Her mate stands by, ready for any interruption; but the Housatonic completes the task without a break—a world record up to that time. In a later excursion the Canonicus lays 860 mines in 3 hours and 35 minutes without a break, making a string longer than from Washington to Baltimore.

"At last, after nearly four hours, the schedule is finished. Now the ships form in four columns and start back to base. Below decks the men are cleaning up, securing the gear, and getting a wash for themselves. That done, they drop in their tracks, dog-tired, and the decks are thick with sleeping forms."

Bulletin No. 2, January 12, 1920.

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Where the Volcanoes and Flying Fishes Play

BECAUSE of the attention directed toward the Hawaiian Islands as the result of the eruption of the volcanic Mauna Loa, on Hilo Island recently, the National Geographic Society issued a bulletin giving a woman traveler's impressions of the islands upon her return to them after a year spent in Washington.

"We had a smooth voyage after the first few days and it seemed good to see the blue sky and bluer water and the flying fish once again," writes Mrs. Shirley Foster Allen. "About noon we sighted our first island, Maui. You could just barely see the great crater of Haleakala rising 10,000 feet out of the sea; and about 3 o'clock we passed Molokai, the leper island. It was after seven when we entered the stream of Honolulu Harbor.

"The harbor was smooth as glass as we slid slowly in to the dock, and the usual flock of young Hawaiians swam out to meet us, playing and diving in the water alongside of us. The full moon hung over Diamond Head, and in between the palm trees the old palace blazed forth in all its electric splendor.

Sensing the Spell of the Tropics

"And then there was the crowd on the dock—white uniforms, white suits, white dresses—they did look so good again. The spell of the tropics was out in full force—it was all so cool and green and peaceful, it was hard to believe that there were places where wars and riots were raging and where people were rushing madly from morning to night! After being away from it for a year, it seemed just like coming into another world. And really it is another world—it's a quaint little comic-opera world all by itself out here in the Pacific!

"However, by the light of broad day it is the same little old place—with all its heterogeneous population, its little narrow streets, and its lazy ways. It is pretty warm here now, but the highest the thermometer has climbed in the middle of the day is 88° and as soon as the sun begins to go down it starts cooling off. The evenings are lovely and cool and there was not a night in July that I didn't use the woolen blanket on my bed before morning.

"After depositing our luggage at the hotel, we drove out to the Territorial Fair, which was holding forth in all its rural splendor. It's very much like a real old-fashioned 'County Fair' but, of course, it is a big event in the annals of Hawaii. Everyone, from the Governor and all the other officials down to the last little kimonoed Jap, with all his brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles, were there, and it was fun meeting so many people we knew. We rode on the merry-go-round, toured the grounds in a jazz-mobile, saw the exhibits and took in the side-shows, watched some fat 'wahines' do the hula, devoured beans at the beanery and consumed gallons of soda pop! We had three days of Fair and then I went out to Kahuku Plantation for ten days among the sugar cane.

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"Even more curious, to the eyes of the traveler from other parts of the world, are the circular boats, made of wickerwork and covered with skins, or made water-tight with pitch, which are still in daily use on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

"The three principal methods of transportation of people in Central and Southern China are the sedan chair, the jinrikisha, and, the wheelbarrow.

"Probably more freight and more passengers are transported in China by the wheelbarrow than by any other land method. The wheelbarrow there used differs from that used by us, in the fact that the wheel is set in the center and thus supports practically the entire load, while the handles are supported in part by a strap or rope over the shoulders of the man who operates it. As a result, the wheelbarrow coolie in China will transport nearly a half ton on his vehicle."

Bulletin No. 3, January 12, 1920.

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Mrs. Monroe's Social Doctrine

Recent interest in the White House, because of the visits there of the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales, was the occasion for issuance of two bulletins concerning the President's home, of which this is the second:

THE "open house" of Jackson and Jefferson, needless to say, was in contrast to the more stately regime of John Adams, first occupant of the White House, to the brilliant but more discriminating entertainments of Dolly Madison's salon, and to the "elegant little dinners" of the naturally exclusive Van Buren.

Mrs. Monroe established some social precedents which are as binding today in Sixteenth Street drawing rooms as is her husband's famous doctrine in the Senate chamber. The ubiquitous Dolly Madison set a hard pace for her successors to travel. Her personal charm was undeniable. If she rouged, wrote one observing lady, she did it so delicately that none could be sure, and "she snuffs," observed another, "but in her hands the snuff-box seems only a gracious implement with which to charm." Truly, to paraphrase an artist, she mixed her rouge and her snuff with brains, and to this indefinable "charm" she added activities so strenuous that the White House scarcely saw her equal until Roosevelt entered it.

White House Mistress Makes No Calls

For her self-protection Mrs. Monroe made the rule that the "first lady of the land" need return no calls, nor must be expected to make any. Mrs. Monroe and her dashing daughter, Mrs. Hay, also had a part in the decision that it was not proper for a President to call at a foreign embassy.

The Monroes not only laid the foundations for White House social customs but they began its furnishing, an evolutionary process which is modified by every mistress of the mansion.

After their official home had been burned by the British in 1814, the Madisons moved for the rest of "Jemmy's" term to the home of Col. Tayloe, better known as the Octagon House, which still is a Washington landmark.

The 1814 invaders of the National Capital, not being Huns, destroyed only public buildings, did that for military reasons, and had specific orders not to loot. They partook of the dinner already prepared at the White House, but before they did so Admiral Cockburn drank the health of President Madison.

In pre-war days, when the White House was accessible to sight-seers, an object of special interest was the portrait of George Washington, now in the Red Room, known as the "Lansdowne Stuart," because it is a copy of an original painting done for the Marquis of Lansdowne. Mrs. Madison had this portrait cut from its frame and intrusted it to the care of friends for safe keeping, while she went to Virginia to join her husband. It was shown to the Prince of Wales when he called at the White House.

The Radio Station

"The Koko Head radio station, where we are living, is about ten miles from town, but as we can come into town in about 35 or 40 minutes in a machine, it won't seem as if we were entirely out of the world. It is almost on the beach, and there are summer homes all along the road, which follows the shore-line. There is an attractive superintendent's bungalow there on which the Marconi Company spent $10,000, and a hotel for employees which is supposed to have cost $85,000. The latter has a big lanai all the way around it, a fine dining room, a recreation hall, and 35 rooms, most of which have private baths.

"The hotel offers wonderful opportunities for dances, and I think we shall have to invite all Honolulu and have a house-warning. One thing that appeals strongly to me is that the place is self-supporting—they have their own ice plant, make their own electricity, have their own machine shops, and everything.

"As I sit here in the old palace where all the kings and queens of Hawaii held forth and look out over the grounds with all their cocoanut and banyan trees and mynah birds, it does seem a far cry back to Washinton, and I wonder if I shall ever get back there again!"

"White House" First a Nickname

When the White House was rebuilt the walls were intact, in part, but they had to be painted to hide the charred surfaces. So originated, first as a nickname, the designation "White House," by which the mansion later was officially known.

The original structure was the first official building in Washington. George Washington was authorized to select a site, because he had been a surveyor, but sentiment, rather than topography, is thought to have determined his choice; for the south windows of the White House overlooked the Potomac toward his beloved Mt. Vernon.

Washington did not live in the White House. He is said to have walked through the rooms a short time before his death. John Adams, its first occupant, thought it ought to have been nearer the Capitol. Mrs. Adams wrote, in 1800, that "the river, which runs up to Alexandria, is in full view of my window, and I see the vessels pass and repass."

But that is ahead of the story. When a site was selected a prize was offered, in 1792, of $500, or a gold medal, for a plan. Capt. James Hoban, a native of Ireland and a resident of Charleston, S. C., won the contest, with a design similar to that of the family seat of the Dukes of Leinster, Dublin. Fortunately Hoban was alive when the work of rebuilding was undertaken after the fire of 1814, and when the structure was completed again, in 1818, it more nearly followed the original plans. Moreover, when the present wings, one for executive offices and the other for a public entrance corridor, were added in 1903, further features contained in the Hoban designs were included.

The "High" Cost of Building a Century Ago

Scarcely a Congress came and went for half a century without an attack upon the alleged extravagant expenditures for the President's home. The cost of reconstruction came in for the customary criticism. Hoban, as architect, was paid at the rate of $1,600 a year; the clerk of the workers received $4 a day; and the overseer, $2 per day.

By the time of President Monroe's inauguration the Executive Mansion was rebuilt, but not furnished. Mr. Monroe had purchased valuable furniture for his private home while he was in Paris. This he sold to the government. it was transferred to the White House for his use there, and he was authorized to buy other pieces for the official rooms.

The idea of a campaign orator that the President's home was "a palace as splendid as that of the Caesars, and as richly adorned as the proudest Asiatic Mansion," hardly found an echo from its early occupants, especially the ladies of presidential families.

Mrs. John Adams, first mistress of the Mansion, wrote of her new abode:

"The lighting of the apartments, from the kitchen to parlours and chambers, is a tax indeed; and the fires we are obliged to keep to secure us from daily agues is another very cheering comfort. To assist us in this great castle, and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanting, not one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. This is so great an inconvenience, that I do not know what to do, nor how to do. If they will put me up some bells, and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. I could content myself almost anywhere three months; but, surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had, because people cannot be found to cut and cart it? We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience, without, and the great unfurnished audience-room I make a drying-room of, to hang up the clothes in."